

An address to  
Friends of Drink

Driffield

1839.

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A N A D D R E S S

TO THE

MANUFACTURERS

AND DEALERS IN

INTOXICATING DRINKS.

**DRIFFIELD:**

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M DCCC XXXIX.

## AN ADDRESS.

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THE awful state in which our beloved country is now found, may chiefly be attributed to the use of intoxicating drinks, consequently the manufacturers and venders of those pernicious articles, whether of rum, gin, brandy, whisky, ale, porter, intoxicating wine, cider, &c., &c., are chargeable, to a most alarming extent, with the poverty, disease, crime, and immorality of the community, they are, therefore, in the spirit of the gospel, in the following address, exhorted to abandon their destructive traffic.

In the faithful but affectionate spirit of love for your high interests, I would therefore warn you of your danger. I need not tell you, that when *souls* are involved in the question, our statements cannot admit either of compromise or modification. But be not so perverse as to suppose, that our stern condemnation of your traffic involves any hatred to your persons; for while I would expose, with uncompromising fidelity, the immeasurable evils which attend it, I do it with the breathing earnestness of a man who is anxious for your temporal and eternal welfare. I know there are some respectable men among you, and my heart longs to see them delivered from such an unholy commerce. Over the period that is past, I would fain draw the shroud of oblivion; and during the 'times of our ignorance,' I blame you not more than other men. You followed your profession in the way of other men. You followed your profession in the spirit of other men, to make a provision for yourselves and your dependants; and we, sharing in the same delusion, encouraged and upheld your traffic, and thus shared along with you in the guilt of an intemperate people.

But, 'the times of this ignorance' are to you and us for ever gone! Investigation has thrown a flood of light over this question, and has revealed the fearfully mischievous tendency of the use of intoxicating drinks. What apology,

then, can you *now* offer for prosecuting a business, which experience has proved so ruinous to man, and so subversive of the gracious design of God's moral government. I beseech you to consider, that from the nature and inevitable effects of intoxicating drinks, the prosperity of your business must necessarily depend on the extent to which you spread disease and crime and wretchedness around you. Nay more, your success must as necessarily depend on the extent to which you spread disease and crime and wretchedness around you. Nay more, your success must necessarily depend on the extent to which you produce intellectual and moral debasement among our people. And it is still more awful to think, that the prosperity of your business must, in a great degree, be commensurate with the extent to which you produce drunkards, and ruin men's souls for eternity. I readily admit that you mean not so, and that you would rather intoxicating drinks did not produce such disastrous results. But as your fruitless wishes cannot change their mischievous tendency, they form no extenuation whatever of your guilt. For the awful fact still remains, that you cannot prosecute your employment without being directly accessory to the eternal ruin of many to whom you deal out this destructive liquid; and that while you are filling out to them the full draught of the cup of intoxication here, you are preparing them for the full draught of the cup of trembling hereafter.

Is this, then, a business which any good man would wish to prosecute? Is this a business for the prosperity of which you can daily bow your knee, and offer your supplications to a God of love and holiness? Can you continue to supply intoxicating liquors to the men who are leaving their wives and children to misery and famine? Does your heart never sink within you when supplying those pitiable wretches, who are already on the verge of insanity, and whose intellectual faculties, reduced by intoxication to a thin watery vision, seem ever ready to depart, and leave them in total idocy? When you hand again and again the cup of intoxication to the drunkard, is your hand never paralized by the dreadful thought, that you are hastening on the final ruin of those over whose heads the shadows of a dark and everlasting night are fast, fast closing around? Does the reflection never glare upon you like a spectre

from the dead, that while one and another of them is disappearing, and making his dark, dark plunge into the world of spirits, that you will meet them again? At that great assemblage of Being, when every individual of our race shall stand before the judgment seat of God, they will re-appear along with you. And when you know that it is heaven's irreversible decree, that 'drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Are you not horror-struck at the anticipation of witnessing their final condemnation, and of being directly accessory to the eternal ruin of those who, throughout a duration which no succession of ages shall ever bring to a close, must have their portion in that place, where 'their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.'

But it is a truth of still more awful import to you, that your traffic as well as their drunkenness, will then undergo a final review before the tribunal of Him, who seeth not as man seeth—who judgeth not as man judgeth. You know, that as the present and the future are but a continuity of existence, nothing here can be final. And as the employments of time have a distinct and awful bearing on man's condition in eternity, and essentially contribute to influence their future destinies, the consequences of your employment must therefore extend to an infinite duration. Is it therefore immaterial, whether your traffic promotes religion and piety, or irreligion and depravity among the people? Is it immaterial to you, whether the men from whom you derive your support, be finally saved or lost? Recollect, that as the mind of God will be the rule of judgment, *then*, so it ought to be the rule of conduct *now*. From the record of his mind, you learn that your first, your last, your supreme duty is to glorify God. But it must be a grievous aberration from sound reason, to imagine, that you can possibly be glorifying God while you continue to ruin man. The grand design of that beneficent dispensation, in which his glory is so illustriously manifested, is to deliver men from the guilt and power of sin, and to renew them in holiness, to fit them for heaven; but your traffic counterworks this beneficent design, for it excites men to sin, and, defacing God's image from their souls, renders them unfit for heaven. What vindication will you then offer at the final judgment, for this unholy traffic, whose results are at irreconcileable variance with his beneficent administration; and with the

undeniable fact before you, that for its results you must finally be responsible, can you continue to multiply the victims of intemperance, and prepare men in multitudes for endless perdition.

But we shall subject your traffic to an examination by the pure and penetrating light of divine truth. And we shall first apply the searching test of the principles of the gospel. The gospel teaches men self-denial for their own and other's good—your traffic cherishes self-indulgence, which is not less adverse to your own than the good of others. The gospel promotes Christian charity, which teaches men to love their neighbour as themselves—your traffic leads men to indulge in evil habits and practices, which have an unfailing tendency to work evil to their neighbour. The gospel inculcates watchfulness against sin—your traffic leads men into temptation, and betrays them into evil. The gospel delivers men from the evil customs and practices of the world—your traffic renders men the slaves of appetite, and subjects them to the dominating influence of the evil customs of society. The gospel enables men to give a purer and holier manifestation of the Christian character—your traffic, by debasing the character, obscures the lustre, and destroys the sanative influence of Christian example. The gospel leads men to repentance and reformation from evil—your traffic hardens them in crime, and renders them still more the victims of every vice. Now, surely, if you are not utter contemners of the gospel, you can neither refuse nor quarrel with such a test. And, having made the application, solemnly look at the dark result, not in the dim light of the world's opinions, but in the clear light of heaven's revelation; and then I leave you to adjust the matter with the great author of the gospel, who, I solemnly remind you, will be your future and final judge.

Thus you see that the specific principles of the gospel are a ministration of death to your traffic; let us now see if the general principles of the bible will offer you any hiding place. And waiving such direct statements as the following:—‘Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunk also.’ ‘Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.’ ‘Be not partakers of other men's sins,’—none of which furnish you any refuge, let me seri-

ously ask you, in saying the Lord's prayer, can the inward sentiments which you breathe, be in perfect accordance with the expression which you utter? You address, 'Our Father, who art in Heaven,' and say, 'Hallowed be thy name,' and can this petition accord with the sale of a liquid which causes men to curse and blaspheme, and profane God's holy name? You say, 'Thy kingdom come,' and can this be consistent with the sale of a liquid, which prevents men from becoming the subjects of his spiritual kingdom here, and excludes them from his kingdom of glory hereafter? You say, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven,' and can such a petition harmonize with the sale of a liquid, which indisposes men to the love and service of God, and destroys all that can ally them to angels; and can you possibly dream, that in selling a liquid which produces this, you are doing the will of your father in heaven? You say, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,' and will that forgiving spirit, which prepares men for forgiveness, be produced by the use of a liquid which excites the irascible passions, and renders men quarrelsome and revengeful? You say, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and can you plead for bread at the expense of the famishing wife and children of the drunkard, who, in purchasing your liquid, is 'spending his money for that which is not bread, and his labour for that which satisfieth not?' And you say, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;' and can you blind your eyes to the fact, that this liquid leads men into every species of temptation, and renders them the easy victims of every species of evil? Look now at the melancholy picture. You know that prayer, to be acceptable, must be the prayer of faith, for 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' And with the solemn declaration of heaven before your eyes, that if you regard iniquity in your heart, the Lord will not hear you,' can you present this prayer in faith, and with the hope of acceptance while you continue to sell a liquid which contravenes it all?

And now one word in reference to your own personal preparation for eternity. These things may pass lightly off your spirits *now*, but what views will you entertain of them when the angel of death comes to alight by you, to send your disembodied spirit into the presence of your Judge. When

you turn your pale face to the wall, and your brow is becoming chill with the cold dews of death, will the retrospect of this traffic minister comfort to your fainting heart? Rest assured that your traffic is not more incompatible with the welfare of the community, than it is with your spiritual well-being. And while it sheds no blessing around you in the life that now is, so it can shed no cheering hope over that which is to come. Is it in spending a life in assisting the drunkard, with his own hands, to close against himself the gates of heaven, that you expect them to be opened to you with the joyful acclamations of angels? Is it in spending a life in dispensing a liquid which unfits men for spiritual exercises here, and incapacitates them for the spiritual enjoyments of heaven, that your soul can be adorned with the beauties of holiness, and fitted for the bright abode of seraph and of saint? Is it in the tumults of a tavern, and in being familiar with such scenes of wickedness and depravity as a tavern exhibits, that your soul can undergo a fit preparation for ascending into the regions of celestial light and beauty, to minister around God's holy throne through eternity? And is it after spending a life in prosecuting a traffic both dis honouring to God and ruinous to man, that you expect to hear the Lord Jesus, who will render to every man according to his works, pronounce on you that blessed commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" Ponder, I beseech you, solemnly ponder these things: and, oh, may the spirit of truth lead you seriously to inquire, whether the roads that lead to heaven and hell lie so close to each other, that you can walk yourself in the narrow path which leadeth to eternal life, while you minister these soul-destroying liquids to those who are walking in the broad way that leadeth to destruction?

I earnestly implore you to give the question your most solemn consideration. Eternity is stamped on the measure, and souls are involved in the result. It is this which invests the question with such awful importance, and can you estimate so lightly the worth of a soul, or the price of its redemption, that its eternal destinies must be sacrificed to the cold calculations of selfishness? Come to the investigation with a candid and prayerful spirit, and, examining it in the solemn light reflected from eternity, see if you can continue to act the part you now do with a good conscience. I know

there are some excellent men among you, and numbers have already surrendered to the calls of conscience and of duty, and many more, when they come to discover its disastrous effects, will instantly abandon this unholy traffic. The worthless will sell on, regardless of the people's misery and their country's ruin—in contravention of Heaven's beneficent administration. But we shall soon discern between those who fear God, and those who fear Him not, for temperance societies will pass round amongst them with the stern and inflexible principles of the gospel, as the test of men's principles; and this will separate the chaff from the wheat.

An awakened public will regard your traffic with horror; they will speak of it in the language of execration. Wher-  
ever you appear, you will meet with eyes which speak a language charged with deep meaning, which will rush upon your soul and disturb your tranquillity. Yes, in the indig-  
nant glance of those eyes, you will not fail to discover that they regard you as the destroyers of the hopes and happiness of men, as those who quench the light of heaven in their souls, and by your deceitful liquid, betray them into endless and unutterable sorrow. The power of an enlightened public opinion will come to bear with irresistible force upon your traffic, and a deep and unendurable odium will rest on those who prosecute it. You will be met at every step of your progress, by the stern expostulations of afflicted humanity and insulted religion—the one complain-  
ing of the sufferings it is enduring, and the other of the injuries you are inflicting on its holy interests. A Christian nation will not continue to endure it, and the loud and indignant cry of a Christian people will be raised against an employment, whose prosperity must be commensurate with the extent to which it produces moral ruin and wretched-  
ness among our people.



